

A NEW INTERPRETATION OF THE SO -CALLED PTAH -  
PATAIKE  
ACCORDING TO THE COLLECTION OF THE EGYPTIAN  
MUSEUM\*

The name Pataikos or Pataikoi had been mentioned by Herodotus<sup>(1)</sup> (111,37,) when he described the acts of Cambyses in Egypt, he said "Thus too he (Cambyses ) entered the temple of Hephaistos ( Ptah ) and made much mordery of the image there. This image of Hephaistos is most like to the Phoenician Pataici ( as the Greek called him) which the Phoenician carry on the prows of their triremes, I will describe it for him who has not seen their figures, it is in the likeness of a dwarf"

Hence most of the Egyptologists<sup>(2)</sup> and Historians<sup>(3)</sup> have agreed that Pataikos is a representation of the God Ptah, and he has a form of a dwarf, and the name Pataikos was derived from the God's name.

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(1) A.D. Godly, Herodotus London 1971 , vol, II, pp. 49 - 52

(2) H. Bonnet, Reallexikon der aegyptischen Religionsgeschichte, Berlin, 1971, p. 584

- John G. Griffith, in, LAe. IV, 1982, p. 419 f.

- S.M. Halmay, The God Ptah, Lund, 1946, pp. 182-185

- R. Huckel, Ueberwesen und Eigenart der Pataike, ZAS, 70 Leipzig, 1934, pp. 103-107

- S. Morenz, Ptah - Hephaistos der Zwerg, Festschrift für Friedrich Zucker, Berlin, 1954, pp. 277 - 290

- J.S. Spiegelberg , Zu dem typus und der Bedeutung der als pataiken bezeichneten Agyptischen Figuren, SBM 1975, pp. 8-11

(3) See as an example :- Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics New York, 1912, vol. V. p. 123.

- It is mentioned here that Pataikos resembles the "Akka" pygmies of Africa .

- A Harnary , in LIMC, 7 , 1994 , p. 26f

- A Harnary , Der Neue Pauly, Encyclopaedia der Antike, Band, 9, Stuttgart, 2000 , p. 391

- W.H. Roscher, Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und Römischen Mythologie, Leipzig, 1886 - 1927, VI, p. 1675f.

Few other Egyptologists <sup>(4)</sup> have mentioned, but without explanation, that these Pataikoi were deformed children because of their big heads, and crooked short hands and legs

Just Daressy <sup>(5)</sup> referred to them as " children, however, he didn't provide any explanation of his description. In my opinion , I agree with Daressy Pataikoi were children, normal children, not deformed , this opinion will be justified by these arguments:-

(1) As for idea of a " deformed children " because of their big heads and the crooked short arms and legs. I think it is a misunderstanding to claim that they are deformed, if examined carefully, all of these characteristics are normal for a new born baby. Fortunately we have a very beautiful, rare, example from the New - Kingdom, which represents a child in a womb of his mother with the crooked, arms and legs <sup>(6)</sup>

Therefore, according to the ancient Egyptian canon of art when the artist want to illustrate a new born child in a standing position he (the child ) would appear in that form.

(2) One of the very important elements connected with the Pataikos and considered its emblem is the scarab, which is at the same time, the emblem or symbol of the rising Sun-God "Hpr" and symbol also for re-birth.

-Most of the groups of Pataikoi in the Egyptian museum have this emblem on the head <sup>(7)</sup> . Pataikoi are represented also on Horus

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<sup>(4)</sup> A.Erman, Die Ägyptische Religion, 1934, p. 57

- L. Lons & P. Hamlyn , Egyptian Methology, New-York, 1975, p. 166.

- L. Shaaw, P. Nickelson, British Museum Dictionary of Ancient Egypt, London 1995 p. 219

<sup>(5)</sup> G. Daressy, Statues des Divinités, Le Caire, 1903.

<sup>(6)</sup> Ostraca from El-Kurna ( Thebes ) - Cairo museum - JE 52074

<sup>(7)</sup> G. Daressy, Statues, pl. XL II .

Cippis <sup>(8)</sup> with scarab on the head. So there is an evident connection between Hpr (Sun – God) <sup>(9)</sup> and Pataikoi .

(3) In some cases, <sup>(10)</sup> we see the image of the God Nfr-Tm (who emerges on a lotus flower from the primeval water ) engraved on the back of Pataikos

(4) As much as Pataikoi are connected with the emblems of the New born Solar- God they are also connected with Horus – cult, we can notice that from.:-

(a) The representation of the Goddess Isis behind the Paraikos in attitude of protection as she did for her son Horus before <sup>(11)</sup>, in some examples Isis replaced by Shmt <sup>(12)</sup> Bastt <sup>(13)</sup> or depicted with Nbt – Ht <sup>(14)</sup> . Isis, generally, is represented with the two horns of Hathor, with the solar-disk, and she always has two plumes.

(b) It is noticeable that there is a connection between Pataikos and the Wd3t eye ( or Horus – eye ) we find it, in some examples, engraved on the socket <sup>(15)</sup> and on one of the Horus Cippis, we see that Wd3t on the head of the Pataikos <sup>(16)</sup> .

(c) Pataikos has the same magic role of Horus the child, it is always depicted as a victorious God standing on crocodiles, and dangerous animals, and always holds Uraus.

<sup>(8)</sup> G. Daressy, Texts et Dissins magiques, le Caire, 1903 pl. 9448.

<sup>(9)</sup> The Beetle – God is represented at times with a beetle upon his head and at others with a beetle for a head.: W. Budge, The Gods of the Egyptians, London, 1904 , vol, II , pp. 355 , 379.

<sup>(10)</sup> Groups no. JE 39230 , 39232

<sup>(11)</sup> Groups no. JE 39232 , 39234-39238 , 39240

<sup>(12)</sup> Shmt alone, group no. JE 39229

Shmt and Neith. no. JE 39230

<sup>(13)</sup> Bastt ( Dd – indw in B3stt ) no. JE 38810

<sup>(14)</sup> Isis and Nbt – Ht groups no. JE 39239 , 39241 , 39246

<sup>(15)</sup> No. JE 38802 , 38805 , 39230 , 39233

<sup>(16)</sup> G. Daressy, Textes et Dessins magiques, pi. 9430

In the few examples <sup>(17)</sup> which have engraved sockels we see always the sign <sup>(18)</sup> which refers to mammals generally besides a fish and an animal.

(d) As above mentioned, Pataikos has sometimes a falcon's head, and in some cases we see two falcons on the both sides <sup>(19)</sup>.

(e) Many of the statuettes of the Pataikoi in the Egyptian museum have the side - lock of the childhood <sup>(20)</sup>.

Therefore from the above mentioned evidences we can derive a conclusion, Pataikos is a representation of the New - born Sun - God or the Solar Hours child, and it has not any connection with the God - Ptah.

As for the name "Ptah" it is not the God's name but it the verb "pṯh" which means "open", or create. If we examine the few examples which indicate the name of the statuette, we notice that the word is written without the determinative of Gods <sup>(21)</sup> but with the sign which depicts a man holds a steck <sup>(22)</sup>, so the meaning of the name is "the Opener", this explanation agrees with the same meaning of this statuette for the Phoenician as <sup>(23)</sup> Roscher has mentioned.

It is known that the legend of the New - born God is one of the most important legends in the "creation" theories, it is said as an

<sup>(17)</sup> No. JE 38802, 38805, 38817, 39230, 39233

<sup>(18)</sup> A. Gardiner, Egyptian Grammar, Oxford, 1973 Sing - list p. 264

<sup>(19)</sup> No. JE 39243

<sup>(20)</sup> G. Darssy, Statues des divinités, pl. XIII no. JE 33796, 39797

<sup>(21)</sup> No. JE 39237, Just Ptah di anli " is written "

<sup>(22)</sup> Inscription on the base no. JE 39233 and on one of the Cippis in the Egyptian Museum no.

JE 9448 and it is written also on Metternich Steale,

G. Daressy Text et Dessins magiques no. JE 9448

H. Brugsch, Hieroglyphisch-Demotisches Wörterbuch, I, Leipzig, 1867 p. 527

<sup>(23)</sup> W. H. Roscher, Ausführliches lexikon, p. 1675

example, about the Sun – God “ the Sun is H , in the mourning Hwn in the afternoon and Atum in sunset <sup>(24)</sup>

This cult of divine children combines between the Sun – cult and Horus cult, which was very popular in Greaco – Roman period, <sup>(25)</sup> in that period the people thought that those children – Gods bring fertility to the nature <sup>(26)</sup>, so they used them as amulets <sup>(27)</sup>

The most divine popular child – God, was “Hr – p3 –Hrd” or Herpokrates , besides, there were numerous divine children, all of them were associated with Sun and Horus Cult.

From these Gods are Mondulis, Chons, Nfr – Tum , Nfr – Htp , Heka , Semtus <sup>(28)</sup>, all these Gods have all characteristic elements of the Solar – baby and Horus.

This divine Solar – child was always depicted in the horizon seated in the prow of the Sun – bark <sup>(29)</sup>, or inside the Sun – disk <sup>(30)</sup> or on the lotus flower which emerges form the primeval – water <sup>(31)</sup>

There are other rare examples which represent the Solar – child seated on the middle of the bark <sup>(32)</sup> or represent it as a scarab in the middle of the Sun – disk .

This representation (the seated child in the prow of the bark) became widely known in late – period, so we see it in the coffins of

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<sup>(24)</sup> “H” or placenta was the symbol of the connection between generations, so certain shrines in Ptolmaic period were built for (H” of the divine child:- E. Feucht in LA III p. 430

<sup>(25)</sup> E. Hornung, in, LA, II, 1977, p. 631

<sup>(26)</sup> H. Bonnet, in, LA, III, 1980, p. 560

<sup>(27)</sup> H. Bonnet, in, LA, II, p. 48 ff.

C.A. Andrews, Amulets of a ancient Egypt, London, 1994, p. 38f

<sup>(28)</sup> R.O. Faulkner, The Book of the Dead, 1998, Cairo, Chap, 15 pl. 8

<sup>(29)</sup> E. Chassinat, Le Temple d’Edfou, 1928, Hypostyle, pls XIX , XXI .

<sup>(30)</sup> E.Brumer- Traut, in, LA, III , 1980 , p. 1042 f.

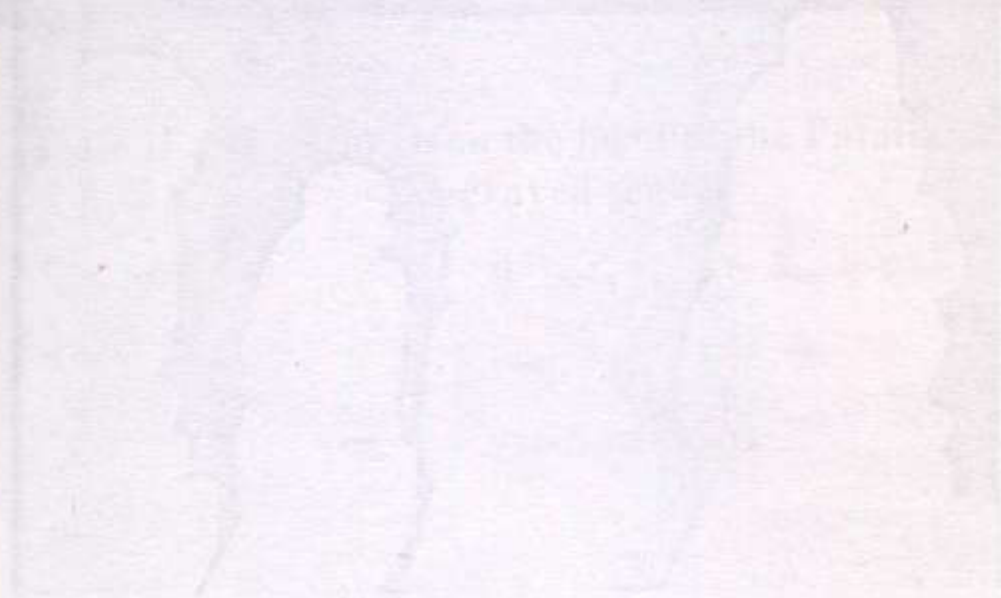
<sup>(31)</sup> W. Budge, The Gods of the Egyptians. pp. 304-308

<sup>(32)</sup> W. Budge, The God of the Egyptians, p. 297.

the common people of the 21 Dyn <sup>(33)</sup> , this explains why the Phoenician put it on the prows of their ships.

Hence to conclude, Pataikoi are one of the different forms of the New born - Sun - God or the Solar - Horus cult , his mane is the "Opener"

See plates I , II.



<sup>(33)</sup> A. Niwinski , Cat du Musee du Caire , La second Travaille de Der-el - Bahari , p. 39 fig 34 (C.G. 6076).

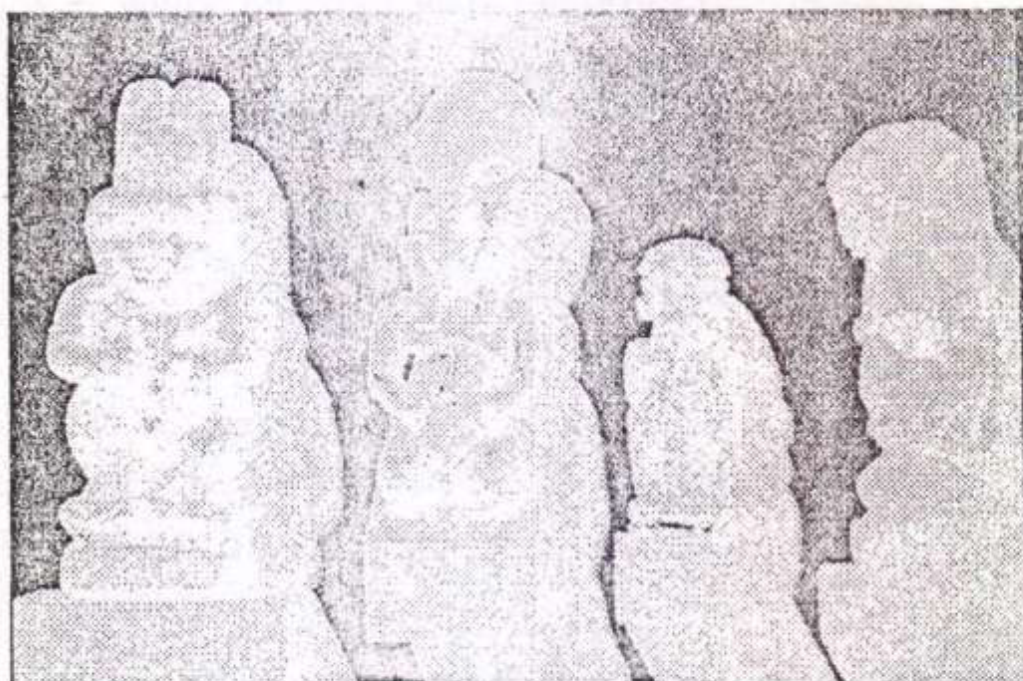
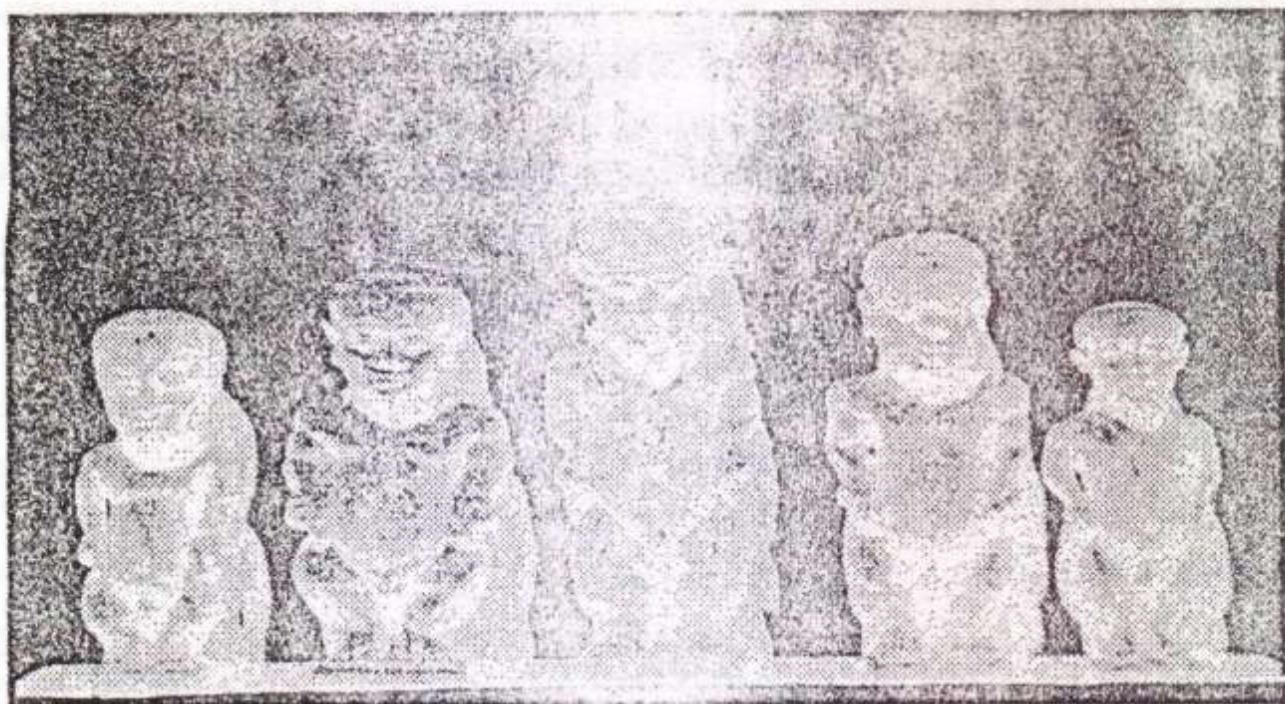


Plate I : Different forms of Pataikoi

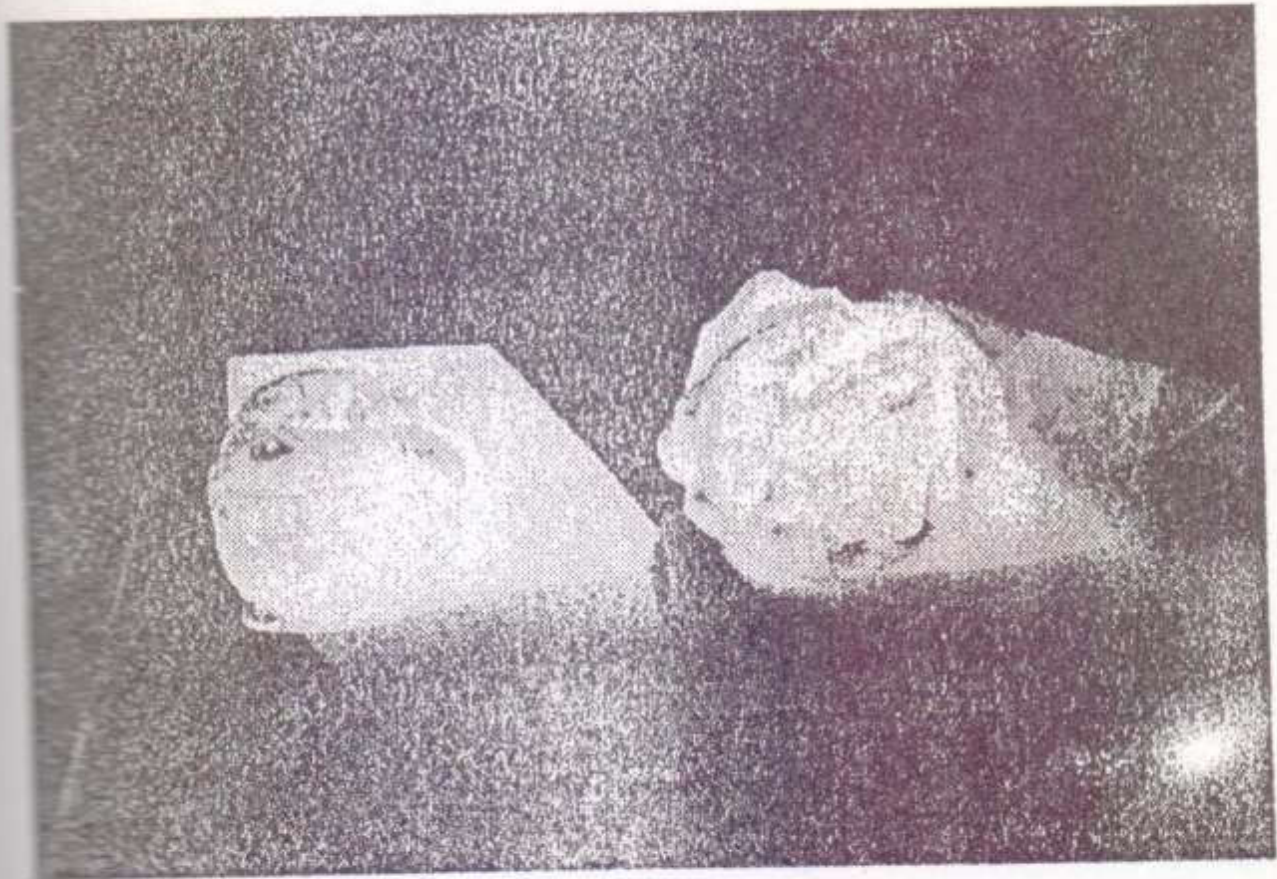


Plate II : The scarab on the head of the Pataike and the engraved socket